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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: WESTERN HEMISPHERE: SOUTH AMERICA-AFRICA SUMMIT, BRAZIL'S FOREIGN POLICY, DARFUR; VENEZUELA, ECUADOR, MANTA; SAO PAULO

¶1. "In Bad Company"

Liberal, largest circulation daily Folha de S. Paulo editorialized (12/3): "Third world leaning is an aspect that the Lula administration's foreign policy explores ad nauseam. It is part of the rational with which the administration feeds ideological groups as a way to symbolically offset the conservative agenda it has adopted in other areas. Such a strategy has frequently led Brazil to embrace anachronistic positions that are inadequate and sometimes unjustifiable to the national interest. Brasilia has just given its support to the planet's worst current genocide: the Darfur massacre, which has already killed more than 200,000 people and made 2.5 million refugees in Sudan. On Tuesday, at the UN Human Rights Council, Brazil's Foreign Ministry abstained from voting a resolution requesting from Sudan the trial of those responsible for the massacre.... Sudanese diplomats could not disguise their satisfaction resulting from the Brazilian decision.... Brazil abandoned the company of nations like Canada, Finland, the Netherlands and Switzerland - which condemned Sudan - to join some of the world's worst dictatorships, whose vote favored Khartoum - Saudi Arabia, Algeria, China, Cuba, Pakistan, Russia and Zambia.... The spurious alliance between dictatorships and nations without moral scope makes Israel the only nation that is always condemned by the Council. When Brazilian diplomacy sacrifices moral principles in favor of pragmatism in an as serious a matter as Darfur, it places Brazil in the uncomfortable position of a nation that is silent before genocide."

¶2. "Childish Disease Of [Brazilian] Diplomacy"

The lead editorial in center-right O Estado de S. Paulo (12/2) remarked: "The lack of meaning and substance of the meetings President Lula has attended reduces the goal of exposition of a Brazilian leader in foreign media to a mere photo opportunity.... It would be better for him to stay at home working on how to unblock the economy instead of attending the event - actually the non-event - he participated in Abuja, Nigeria. First, because the Africa-South America Summit confirmed its expected weakness. Representatives of 66 nations attended the summit, but only 25 of them were heads of state.... Such an obsession for great meetings is a kind of childish disease of [the Brazilian] diplomacy.... It is an extremely poor substitution for a robust foreign policy. Such an attitude lacks strategic endurance because it does not follow the world's realities.... [The GOB] intends to exempt 50 poor nations, 34 of which African, from import taxes. It is a humanitarian gesture. But in view of an issue that has revolted the civilized world - the Darfur massacre - Brazil has been seen to be less humanitarian by

absenting itself from the UN when demanding Khartoum's Muslim government end the killings and the punishment of officials involved. Brazil's decision was celebrated by Sudan's delegates as a 'reflex of the Lula administration's policy in regards to Africa.' The phrase could be an epitaph."

¶3. "Re-Re-Election"

Political columnist Eliane Cantanhede commented in liberal, largest circulation daily Folha de S. Paulo (12/3): Three days before his re-election, President Hugo Chvez said he was considering changing the Constitution to end the limits for reelection so the president could be reelected as many times as he wished. It's the right to 'indefinite reelection,' as Chvez clearly said in an interview during which he spoke for more than three hours like Fidel Castro, his greatest living idol.... Chvez learned from Fidel and has taught his followers Evo Morales, in Bolivia, and Rafael Correa, in Ecuador. All of them say they are 'leftists' and use oil and gas as political force and economic threat. Chvez continues to sell to the U.S. regardless of his rhetoric and bellicose campaign.... The challenge of Chvez's followers is, like Chvez, to confine the opposition into limits that permit them to act, shout, change the Constitution and win elections. Morales is already facing strong domestic problems. The same will happen with Correa. Chvez and Correa will visit Brazil this week and then will meet Lula and Morales in Bolivia. The three need Brazil's support and Lula's endorsement. They are the 'revolutionaries' who set fire. Lula is the reformer who extinguishes the fire."

¶4. "The Ecuadorian Cost Of Bush's Domination"

Columnist Elio Gaspari opined in liberal, largest national circulation daily Folha de S. Paulo (12/3): "A major problem has emerged for the Bush administration's imperial diplomacy. Rafael

Correa's election in Ecuador has confronted the gun diplomacy that the US is trying to impose on South America. Correa announced that he will send back home the 400 US military currently in the Manta air and naval base, where the US built one of the continent's best landing strips. The Manta Base was yielded for ten years in 1999 to permit the surveillance of coca cultivation in Colombia and the monitoring of international drug trafficking in that area of the Pacific. The domination emerged in the following developments. The Americans transformed what would be cooperation against drug trafficking into a domestic police operation. Ships of the US Coast Guard and Navy began to patrol Ecuadorian territorial waters. They seized dozens of boats, detained thousands of citizens and sank at least eight boats.... President Rafael Correa wants the Americans to pack and leave in 2009. The initial contract had a justification. Its degradation, however, recommends ending the experience. It will be a good fight, because if South America does not wake up, the next Guantanamo Base will be in the neighborhood."

McMullen